**Excerpted from the Gateways Website, 1-22-17 and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ document):**


**The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant Education Reimbursement Opportunity**

This is a limited time offer available from January 2017 through April 20, 2017. This is your chance to apply for funds to support you in continuing your education and working towards a Gateways Credential or early childhood degree. Any educator working in an Illinois early learning program is eligible to apply regardless of the setting, including Preschool for All, Early Head Start / Head Start, Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes.

You can apply for up to $503 per credit hour towards tuition and fees for coursework taken in Fall 2016 or Winter/Spring/Summer 2017. In addition, you can apply for up to $1,000 to repay an outstanding debt to an Illinois college or university that may be preventing you from enrolling in courses or receiving your transcript. All educators working in an Illinois early learning program are welcome to apply, however priority will be given to the following groups:

- Individuals who can demonstrate substantial progress toward a Gateways Credential or Degree by December of 2017.
- Preschool for All teacher assistants pursuing a degree path that leads to a Professional Educator License with a Bilingual or ESL Endorsement.
- Individuals pursuing a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential.
- Individuals participating in a structured cohort sponsored by an Institution of Higher Education or local collaboration.

Please be aware that because funds are limited, not all reimbursement requests will be granted.

To apply for this limited opportunity use the applications below. Ensure that you review and complete each section, and send any required information with your applications. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed and will be returned by mail to the applicant, highlighting what is incomplete.

- Are you a current Gateways Registry Member? Download the Education Reimbursement Application and Information Update Form.
- If you are not a current Gateways Registry Member, download the Education Reimbursement Application and Gateways Registry Membership Form.

Education Reimbursement Schedule

- January 2017 – April 20, 2017 – Applications accepted and checked for completeness
- April 2017 – May 2017 – Applications reviewed and prioritized
- June 2017 – Reimbursement eligibility announced
- June 2017 – Reimbursement checks released
- No reimbursement payments will be made until June 2017

Still have questions? Take a moment to read the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge Grant Education Reimbursement Opportunity Frequently Asked Questions.

**Q. What is the RTT-ELC Early Childhood Professional Education Reimbursement Project?**

A. This project is an opportunity for early educators to continue their education and overcome barriers or obstacles to earning their next degree or credential. It provides 100% funding (up to a maximum of $503 per credit hour) for tuition and fees for coursework taken in Fall 2016 or
Winter/Spring/Summer 2017. It also provides an additional maximum of $1,000 to repay existing debt to an Illinois college or university that presents a barrier to enrolling in courses.

Q. Who is eligible to apply?

A. Any educator working in an Illinois early learning program is eligible to apply regardless of the setting, including Preschool for All, Early Head Start / Head Start and Child Care. Individuals completing practicum, volunteer or student teaching hours in an early learning setting are also eligible. Applicants must have a minimum of 90 days of service in the early learning field as an employee or volunteer. Additional, priority is given to applicants pursuing a Gateways to Opportunity Infant Toddler Credential (particularly levels 2 or 3), bilingual teacher assistants pursuing a degree path that leads to a Professional Educator License with an Early Childhood endorsement, ECE professionals who are pursuing and can make substantial progress towards their next credential or degree, or educators participating in a structured cohort sponsored by an institution or local collaboration.

Per email correspondence between Dr. Robin Miller Young (NIU) and Toni Porter (INCCRRRA), Monday, January 23, 2017: “In reference to student proof of their service, they would need to show that they have completed 3 credits in ECE/CD coursework (preferably from the previous term) as a full time student. They could submit a grade report or transcripts with their applications as proof.”

Q. How may funds be used?

A. Funds will be provided on a reimbursement basis upon providing evidence of paid coursework or an outstanding balance due to the institution. These limited funds may be used for current tuition/fees to take coursework towards an early childhood credential or degree. Additional limited funds are also available to repay existing debt that prevents college enrollment, such as an unpaid course or transcript fee, up to $1,000.

Q. When will the application be available?

A. Applications will be made available from January to April 20, 2017 on the Gateways to Opportunity website at http://www.ilgateways.com/.

Q: What is the timeline for eligibility and release of funds?

A: The Education Reimbursement Schedule is as follows:

January 2017 – April 20, 2017 – Applications accepted and checked for completeness

April 2017 – May 2017 – Applications reviewed and prioritized

June 2017 – Reimbursement eligibility announced
June 2017 – Reimbursement checks released

No reimbursement payments will be made until June 2017.

Q: How will I know if my application has been received?

A: Incomplete applications will not be processed. Incomplete applications will be mailed back to the applicant highlighting what is incomplete. Once the application is complete the applicant can resubmit the application. Complete applications will be processed and a letter will be sent to the applicant stating that a complete application has been received. Applicants will be notified of eligibility by letter in June 2017.

More Questions? Contact Toni Porter of INCCRRA at TPorter@inccrra.org

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